

**Amendments to the Claims:** This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

**Listing of Claims:**

1. - 22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) A method for treating beer comprising contacting the beer with a composition comprising a silica xerogel comprising between 0.2 and 1.0 mmol/g of a metal component per gram of the xerogel, wherein said metal component comprises at least one alkali metal in an amount between 0.2 mmol/g and 1.0 mmol/g per gram of the xerogel, the xerogel having a pH between 8.0 and 10.5.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the metal component further comprises at least one alkaline earth metal.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the xerogel comprises less than 0.1 mmol/g in total of said at least one alkaline earth metal per gram of the xerogel.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel comprises between 0.3 and 0.8 mmol/g of the metal component per gram of the xerogel.

27. - 30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel comprises between 0.3 and 0.8 mmol/g of the metal component per gram of the xerogel.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel comprises between 0.4 and 0.7 mmol/g of the metal component per gram of the xerogel.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the at least one alkali metal is sodium.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the at least one alkali metal is potassium.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the pH of the xerogel is between 8.5 and 10.0.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel is an acid-set xerogel.
37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel is an alkaline-set xerogel.
38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel is a calcined xerogel.
39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel is a hydrothermally treated xerogel.
40. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel comprises between 0.4 and 0.7 mmol/g of the metal component per gram of the xerogel.
41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein said at least one alkali metal is sodium.
42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein said at least one alkali metal is potassium.
43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, having a pH between 8.5 and 10.0.
44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel is an acid-set xerogel.
45. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel is an alkaline-set xerogel.
46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel is a calcined xerogel.
47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel is a hydrothermally treated xerogel.
48. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein:  
the xerogel is a hydrothermally treated xerogel comprising less than 0.1 mmol/g in total of said at least one alkaline earth metal;

the xerogel comprises between 0.4 and 0.7 mmol/g of the metal component per gram of the xerogel;

said at least one alkali metal is sodium; and

the pH is between 8.5 and 10.0.

49. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the metal component comprises at least 0.2 mmol/g but less than 1.0 mmol/g of the alkali metal and correspondingly no more than 0.8 mmol/g of the alkaline earth metal per gram of the xerogel.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49, wherein a molar ratio of the alkali metal to the alkaline earth metal in the metal component is between about 5:95 and about 95:5.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49, wherein a molar ratio of the alkali metal to the alkaline earth metal in the metal component is between about 30:70 and about 70:30.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the silica xerogel is contacted with the beer in an amount of between about 100 ppm and 800 ppm.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the silica xerogel is contacted with the beer in an amount of between about 200 ppm and 600 ppm.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 53, wherein the silica xerogel is contacted with the beer in an amount of between about 300 ppm and 500 ppm.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the contacting step further comprises contacting the beer with another additive selected from the group consisting of polyvinylpolypyrrolidone, a foam stabilizer, an anti-oxidant, perlite, and diatomaceous earth, and mixtures thereof.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of separating the silica xerogel from the beer.